

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for imposing the ban;

(c) whether Government have gathered information regarding the total units engaged in the production of non-iodised salt in the country and the annual production of salt by them; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) In order to prevent and control Iodine Deficiency Disorders restrictions have been imposed nationwide on the sale of edible common salt for direct human consumption unless the same is iodised under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and Rules 1955 with effect from 17th May 2006. There is no ban on production of common salt and the same can be sold for Iodisation, Iron Fortification, Preservation, Industrial, Medicinal and animal use. As per Surveys conducted by the Directorate General of Health Services, Indian Council of Medical Research, State Health Directorates and Health Institutions out of 324 districts surveyed covering all the States/UTs 263 districts are endemic i.e. where the prevalence of Iodine Deficiency Disorders is more than 10%. Thus no State/UT is free from Iodine Deficiency Disorders, therefore no part of the country is excluded from the above mentioned restrictions.

(c) and (d) During the year 2005, there were 3278 recognised and 9776 unrecognised Units engaged in the production of common salt/non iodised salt in the country and record production of 199.23 lakh tones of salt was achieved during the year 2005.

Rail manufacturing

2682. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether rail manufacturers in other countries are using Tank Degasser or RH Degasser or both for control of hydrogen in rail steel;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the process being used in India; and

(d) the specifications issued in this regard, the representations received and the action taken to review the specifications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Rail manufacturer in other countries are having both the processes i.e. Tank Degasser, RH Degasser for control of hydrogen in rail steel;

(b) The details of Rail Manufacturer in other countries having Tank Degasser or RH Degasser is not maintained in Ministry of Railways;

(c) R H Degasser for control of hydrogen is being used by Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai, the sole supplier of rails to Indian Railways;

(d) The relevant para of the specification for hydrogen removal from rail molten steel is as follows "Vacuum degassing of liquid steel shall be done to reduce the hydrogen content. For this purpose RH degasser shall be used. The vacuum level and the duration for which liquid steel shall be kept under this vacuum level shall be decided mutually by the purchaser and the manufacturer. All measurement of hydrogen shall be done for the liquid steel in tundish or mould. Any other method of sampling or determination of hydrogen will require prior approval of the purchaser." One firm and around twenty five Hon'ble MPs have represented in this regard. The issue of RH degassing vis-a-vis Vacuum Tank degassing has been discussed in detail within the Ministry as well as in the Specification meeting specially convened for this purpose on 24/02/2006. It has been decided that existing provision of the specification to be retained in view of consistent quality as observed.

Construction of walls on railway lands

†2683. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating on erecting walls on railway lands in all the States to check encroachment of the same;

(b) the total walls (in kilometres) erected so far including metropolitan cities;

(c) whether the work of erecting walls would be contracted out to local contractors and labourers; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.